

Message Text

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CORRECTED COPY (DECLAS JULY 12, 1998 VICE JULY 12 1978)

EO 11652: XGDS-1 DECLAS JULY 12, 1978
TAGS: PINT IT
SUBJECT: BRIEF ENCOUNTERS WITH THE THIRD PARTY

SUMMARY. INTERVIEWS WITH SOME TWO DOZEN KEY PCI OFFICIALS
IN MILAN CONSULAR DISTRICT, MOST DURING LAST TEN MONTHS BUT OTHERS
SINCE 1974, SHOW VERY DIFFERENT PARTY THAN KNOWN IN PAST.
THOSE WHOM WE HAVE INTERVIEWED APPEAR SUBSTANTIALLY HONEST
IN THEIR COMMITMENT TO WESTERN STYLE DEMOCRACY, LOYALTY TO EC
AND NATO, FRIENDSHIP TOWARD US, INDEPENDENCE FROM SOVIET UNION,
AND COMMITMENT TO MIXED MARKET ORIENTED ECONOMY. ALTHOUGH PER-
SONAL COMMITMENT OF PCI OFFICIALS IS NOT SOLE INDICATOR OF PCI
ACCEPTABILITY AS FAR AS USG CONCERNED, IT IS AN IMPORTANT ONE.
AND WE CONCLUDE THAT THESE OFFICIALS' VALUES AND OUTLOOK HAVE
CHANGED CONSIDERABLY. END SUMMARY.

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1. INTRODUCTION: DURING PAST FOUR AND ONE HALF YEARS SINCE
AUTHORIZATION FIRST GIVEN FOR CONTROLLED CONTACTS WITH PCI
OFFICIALS, MILAN HAS BEGUN OR DEVELOPED RELATIONSHIP WITH ABOUT TWO
DOZEN. GREATER NUMBER OF THESE CONTACTS HAVE BEEN MADE
SINCE THE NEW GUIDELINES WERE ISSUED IN JUNE 1977. MAJORITY ARE
PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES, KEY PARTY OFFICIALS AT LOCAL LEVEL, MOST
OF WHOM WE HAVE INTERVIEWED WITHIN LAST SIX MONTHS. SEVERAL

ARE MORE SENIOR AND OLDER MEMBERS, SOME NOW MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OR FORMER MP'S WHOM WE HAVE KNOWN LONGER AND IN GREATER DEPTH. WE EXCLUDE FROM CONSIDERATION HERE THOSE CASUAL CONTACTS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY AT LEAST ONE HOUR LONG INTERVIEW. ALL OF THESE DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED BY MY DEPUTY OR MYSELF OR BY BOTH.

2. INASMUCH AS WE MAY HAVE INTERVIEWED A GREATER NUMBER OF PCI OFFICIALS THAN ANY OTHER DEPARTMENT OFFICERS IN ITALY (POSSIBLY SINCE 1947), OUR FIRST HAND IMPRESSIONS MAY BE A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONTINUING APPRAISAL OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

3. ALL OF OUR CONTACTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO THE DEPARTMENT BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO PREVIOUS REPORT PULLING THE DATA TOGETHER. WORTH NOTING THAT, ALTHOUGH THESE CONTACTS KNOWN LOCALLY, THEY HAVE NEVER CAUSED UNFAVORABLE COMMENT.

4. OUR SAMPLE.
OUR UNIVERSE IS DIVIDED INTO TWO VERY UNEVEN GROUPS: SENIOR AND OLDER ELECTED OFFICIALS; AND PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES. WE EXCLUDE COMMUNIST TRADE UNIONISTS, NOT BECAUSE THEIR ATTITUDES SHOW ANY NOTABLE VARIANCE FROM THE OTHERS BUT BECAUSE WE HAVE INTERVIEWED TOO FEW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL SAMPLE.

5. THE SENIOR GROUP.
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THE SENIOR GROUP IS THAT WHICH WE HAVE KNOWN LONGEST AND BEST. SILVIO LEONARDI, DEPUTY FROM MILAN; ELIO QUERCIOLI, DEPUTY FROM MILAN, CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER AND FORMER PROVINCIAL SECRETARY; RINO SERRI, VENICE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER, GIANNI PELLICANI, DEPUTY FROM VENICE AND DEPUTY MAYOR; VITTORIO KORACH, FORMER DEPUTY, AND NOW DEPUTY MAYOR OF MILAN; ROBERTO VITALI, PRESIDENT OF PROVINCE OF MILAN. BECAUSE OF CHANGES IN CONSULAR DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND RISE OF SOME OF THESE TO NATIONAL LEVEL, WE NO LONGER HAVE CONTACT WITH SOME.

6. ALL OF THESE ARE MEN MIDDLE AGED, MATURED POLITICALLY DURING THE WAR OR IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER. VITALI IS THE LONE EXCEPTION SINCE HE IS NOT YET 40. ALL HOLD PUBLIC OFFICE AND IT IS IN THAT WAY THAT WE MET THEM. FOUR OF THEM HAVE VISITED THE UNITED STATES SINCE WE HAVE KNOWN THEM. ALL OF THEM ENJOY GOOD REPUTATIONS WITH THEIR LOCAL POLITICAL PEERS. THEY ARE TRUSTED AS INDIVIDUALS AND RESPECTED. QUERCIOLI, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS INTRODUCED TO US BY CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT DE CAROLIS WHO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ARRANGING QUERCIOLI'S VISIT TO THE US AND WHO SAID THAT IF ALL

COMMUNISTS WERE LIKE QUERCIOLI, ITALIAN DEMOCRACY WOULD BE IN GOOD HANDS. WE HAVE HEARD THE SAME ABOUT KORACH AS WELL.

7. WHAT DO THESE OLDER GENERATION PCI LEADERS SAY TO US?

8. FIRST, THAT THEY WANT TO KNOW THE UNITED STATES BETTER AND TO BE BETTER KNOWN BY US. QUERCIOLI IN EARLY 1975 SAID THAT THE VISITS BEING MADE BY PCI MEMBERS TO THE US WERE DOING A WORLD OF GOOD. HIS OWN VISIT HAD BEEN AN EYE OPENER. THE VALUE OF THESE TRIPS WAS THAT THEY CHANGED THE STEREOTYPES WHICH THE PCI LEADERSHIP HAD HAD OF THE UNITED STATES OVER PAST DECADES. SECOND, THAT THEY WANT ITALY TO BE A PART OF THE

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WESTERN COMMUNITY WITHIN NATO. IN 1973, FOR EXAMPLE, A LEADING PROPONENT OF WESTERN EUROPEAN UNIFICATION, SILVIO LEONARDI, TOLD US THAT THE PCI NEEDED NATO TO SAVE IT FROM SOVIET COMMUNISM IN ITALY. HE SAID THEN, AND STILL SAYS, THAT THE PCI CANNOT HOPE TO RETURN TO GOVERNMENT IN ITALY UNTIL ITALY IS A PART OF A GENUINELY UNITED WESTERN EUROPE THAT IS UNQUESTIONABLY NON-COMMUNIST SO THAT THE US AND OTHERS WILL BE SURE THAT ITALY CANNOT DEFECT TO THE SOVIET BLOC.

9. THIRD, THAT THE PCI IS COMMITTED TO WESTERN STYLE DEMOCRACY AND THAT IT HAS REJECTED THE SOVIET MODEL. VITALI, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD US IN LATE 1977 THAT THE PCI WAS PLEDGED TO PLURALISM BECAUSE THAT WAS WHAT ITS MEMBERS WANTED. THE PCI HAD BECOME A MASS PARTY ON THIS PLATFORM AND IF IT RETURNED TO EASTERN EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM, IT WOULD LOSE ITS MASS SUPPORT AND BECOME MARGINAL. ON ANOTHER OCCASION, VITALI ARGUED THAT THE PCI ACCEPTANCE OF NATO WAS GENUINE AND THAT IF THERE WERE WAR BETWEEN NATO AND THE USSR, THE PCI WOULD BACK ITALY. AND IN LATE 1975 HE INSISTED THAT THE PCI BELIEVED IN WESTERN DEMOCRACY AND SAW NO FUTURE FOR ITALY EXCEPT THAT. THIS WAS NOT RUSSIA OR CHINA OR PORTUGAL, THIS WAS ITALY WITH ITALIAN TRADITIONS OF FREEDOM AND THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE WITH FASCIST

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TOTALITARIANISM. IT WAS NOT ABOUT TO REJECT A DICTATORSHIP OF THE RIGHT FOR ONE OF THE LEFT. THE VENICE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, RINO SERRI, ONE OF THE MOST HIGHLY RESPECTED PCI LEADERS IN THE PO VALLEY (EVEN THE ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE PATRIARCH OF VENICE PRAISED HIM) TOLD US THE SAME. IN EARLY 1976, HE TOLD US THAT THE PCI HAD MADE A CLEAR CHOICE FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM THE USSR. IT MADE A MAJOR DECISION TO BE WESTERN EUROPEAN AND NOT SOVIET. THERE WAS A REAL SPLIT WITH MOSCOW, NOT A FALSE ONE. PCI ACCEPTANCE OF NATO IN ITALY WAS A RISK SINCE US BASES AND TROOPS IN ITALY COULD BE THE NUCLEUS FOR AN ANTI-COMMUNIST COUP D'ETAT. AND THE US RECORD IN CHILE, GUATEMALA, CUBA AND VIETNAM WAS NOT REASSURING. BUT IT WAS A RISK THAT THE PCI HAD DECIDED TO TAKE. IT MIGHT WELL MEAN THAT HE WOULD END UP IN ONE OF OUR PRISONS. IT WAS NOT A RISK THAT HE JUDGED LIGHTLY.

10. FOURTH, THAT THE PCI'S PRESENT COMMITMENT TO WESTERN DEMOCRACY, NATO AND INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION IS NOT TACTICAL BUT FUNDAMENTAL. VITALI IN LATE 1975 CONTENDED THAT THE PCI
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POSITION WAS NOT A POSE FOR TACTICAL REASONS. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR HIM AND OTHER PCI LEADERS TO PUT ON AN ACT FOR MONTHS ON END. IT WAS NAIVE TO IMAGINE THAT EVEN COMMUNISTS COULD BE THAT CLEVER, THAT MACHIAVELLIAN. DID WE SUPPOSE THAT A PARTY THAT HAD BUILT UP A MASS FOLLOWING BY DEMOCRATIC, EVOLUTIONARY POLICIES COULD SUDDENLY SWITCH? AN ELITE PARTY LIKE THAT IN ENGLAND MIGHT. BUT IT WAS CONDEMNED TO REMAIN INSIGNIFICANT AS A RESULT. QUERCIOLI IN LATE 1974 SAID MUCH THE SAME. THE PCI COULD NOT RULE ITALY AFTER IT HAD COME TO POWER WITHOUT CONTINUING THE PUBLIC CONSENT BY AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY. IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO THINK THAT THE COMMUNISTS COULD PRETEND TO

BE ONE ANIMAL IN ORDER TO OBTAIN POWER AND THEN TO TURN INTO ANOTHER WITHOUT DESTROYING ITSELF IN THE PROCESS, HE SAID.

11. PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES.

OUR SECOND CATEGORY OF PCI CONTACTS COMPRISES TWELVE PROVINCIAL AND TWO CITY SECRETARIES. THEY ARE OVERWHELMINGLY OF A YOUNGER GENERATION - MOSTLY IN EARLY THIRTIES TO EARLY FORTIES - AND MOST JOINED THE PARTY WELL AFTER STALIN AND 1956 INVASION OF HUNGARY. IN MOST CASES, EXCEPT MILAN, WE HAVE MET THEM ONLY ONCE. CONSERVATIVE DRESSERS (WITH TIES AND OFTEN VESTS), THEY ARE CALM AND GENERALLY FRIENDLY. THEY WORK OUT OF HEADQUARTERS THAT ARE TASTEFULLY AND FUNCTIONALLY DESIGNED, POPULATED WITH 10-20 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES, AND INDICATING AMPLE BUT NOT WASTEFUL FINANCING. ABOUT HALF CLAIM TO BE EX-WORKERS WITH NO UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE. MOST HAVE TRAVELLED TO RUSSIA AND/OR EASTERN EUROPE AS WELL AS ELSEWHERE IN WESTERN EUROPE BUT NONE HAS BEEN TO THE US TO OUR KNOWLEDGE.

12. FROM OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THESE YOUNGER SECRETARIES, WE WOULD MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

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A. PCI SECRETARIES HAVE BEEN HAPPY TO SEE US. MANY HAVE SAID SO. SOME ARE EMBARRASSINGLY COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT THE UNITED STATES - LIKE THE CREMONA SECRETARY WHO SAID THE US WAS THE MODEL FOR ALL ITALIANS WHO WANTED KIND OF LIFE AMERICANS HAVE. ALL HAVE GONE TO SOME LENGTHS TO CLARIFY WHAT THEY REGARD AS OUR MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PARTY. ALL GAVE IMPRESSION THEY FELT WE WOULD BE MORE SYMPATHETIC TO PCI IF WE UNDERSTOOD IT BETTER. NONE COULD BE PROVOKED ALTHOUGH WE OFTEN TREATED THEM ALMOST RUDELY, IMPLICITLY QUESTIONING THEIR HONESTY ABOUT PCI MOTIVES, THEIR LOYALTY TO THE USSR, THEIR TOTALITARIAN WEAKNESSES. ALMOST ALL ASKED US ABOUT US POLICY TOWARD PCI AND ITALY BUT TIME CONSTRAINTS ON US OFTEN LIMITED THIS PART OF CONVERSATION IN FIRST ROUND OF INTERVIEWS SINCE WE MADE HIGHER PRIORITY OF PROBING FOR THEIR VIEWS. MOST OFTEN POSED QUESTION WAS "WHAT DO THEY THINK OF PCI (OR ITALIAN SITUATION) IN US?" SINCE INTERLOCUTORS GENERALLY GOT A CHANCE TO ASK QUESTIONS ONLY AT END OF VISIT, WE SPENT LESS TIME DESCRIBING OUR OWN POSITION THAN THEY -OR WE- WOULD HAVE LIKED.

B. SECRETARIES APPEARED SLIGHTLY BAFFLED THAT WE CONTINUED TO REPROVE THEM FOR STALINIST/LENINIST PAST OR FOR FAULTS OF OTHER COMMUNIST REGIMES. THEY CLAIMED TO REPRESENT PARTY THAT HAD CHANGED

AND FOR WHICH, MOREOVER, CHANGE WAS NATURAL
AND POSITIVE PHENOMENON AND NOT MATTER TO BE HANDLED DEFENSIVELY.

C. ALTHOUGH ALL SECRETARIES QUICK TO DISOWN STALINISM, LENINISM WAS
VESTIGE OF PAST ON WHICH IDEAS SEEMED LESS CLEAR CUT. MOST COMMON
RESPONSE WAS EVASIVE ONE THAT LENIN WAS GREAT LEADER WHO OPERATED
IN DIFFERENT TIME AND PLACE AND WHOSE DICTA THEREFORE WERE SIMPLY NOT
TRANSFERABLE IN CRUDE WAY TO MODERN ITALY. WHEN WE PRESSED MILAN
CITY SECRETARY AUGUSTO CASTAGNA WITH OBSERVATION THAT ESSENCE
OF LENINISM WAS VIOLENT REVOLUTION THAT DESTROYED OLD ORDER
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TO GIVE BIRTH TO NEW, HE REPLIED WEAKLY THAT LENIN'S WRITINGS SO
VOLUMINIOUS THAT QUOTE COULD BE FOUND TO SUPPORT ALMOST ANY
THESIS. WHAT REMAINED VALID IN LENINISM, IN HIS VIEW, WAS
PRAGMATISM IN DEVISING POLITICAL STRATEGY. WHEREAS PSI, FOR
EXAMPLE, CONTINUED DOGMATICALLY TO ESPOUSE LEFTIST COALITION FOR
ITALY, HIS PARTY HAD LONG AGO SEEN THAT ONLY REALISTIC SOLUTION
LAY IN PCI-DC ALLIANCE. IN SUM, SECRETARIES MAKE NO BONES ABOUT
LENIN'S BEING INESCAPEABLE PART OF THEIR PARTY'S HISTORY AND
THEY REFUSE TO SIMPLY JETTISON HIM. BUT THEY ALSO APPEAR TO
REGARD HIM AS LARGELY IRRELEVANT TO MODERN ITALY, A SLIGHT
EMBARRASSMENT WHOM SOME EXPLAIN AWAY BETTER THAN OTHERS.

D. PCI COMMITMENT TO WESTERN-STYLE DEMOCRACY WAS INSISTENT THEME
FOR SECRETARIES. QUITE APART FROM THEIR OWN PERSONAL COMMITMENT,
THEY SAID GUARANTEE IS PCI'S MASS CHARACTER. ANY STEP BACKWARDS FROM
LIBERTIES ITALIANS HAVE ENJOYED SINCE WAR WOULD MEAN RESOUNDING
LOSS OF SUPPORT FOR PARTY RESPONSIBLE AND PCI HAD NO INTENTION OF
BEING THAT PARTY.

E. SAME WAS TRUE FOR NATO. ITALY WAS WESTERN COUNTRY AND WEST
-NOT EASTERN SOCIALIST NATIONS- WAS MODEL FOR PCI. ONE SECRETARY
ADDED
THAT PCI WAS AGAINST ARMED BLOCS BUT THEY WERE FACT OF LIFE THAT
WOULD NOT SOON DISAPPEAR. UNTIL THEY DID, ITALY WOULD NECESSARILY
BE LOYAL MEMBER OF NATO.

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F. PCI'S DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM, SAID SECRETARIES, MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN

CENTRAL. THEY CLAIMED ALL MAJOR ISSUES AIRED THROUGHOUT PARTY IN OPEN BUT DISCIPLINED WAY AND THAT SITUATION CERTAINLY COMPARED FAVORABLY WITH THAT WITHIN DC. TRUE THAT PCI HAD NO ORGANIZED INTERNAL FACTIONS BUT THAT WAS GROSS DEFECT OF OTHER ITALIAN PARTIES THEY DID NOT FEEL COMPELLED TO ADOPT.

G. SECRETARIES' VIEWS ON UNIONS, VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT ROLE IN INDUSTRY AND SIMILAR TOPICS ASTONISHINGLY CONSERVATIVE. ALL ENDORSED RECENT LAMA STATEMENT ON NEED FOR UNION FORBEARANCE AS ONLY POSITION SENSIBLE PERSON COULD POSSIBLY TAKE. ON CONDITION OF SCHOOLS, CREMONA SECRETARY SAID PCI DESERVED PART OF BLAME FOR HAVING CONDONED OVERLY LAX APPROACH IN PAST. ON TERRORISM, ALL AGREED ITALIAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES NEEDED REINFORCING. AND SO ON.

H. SECRETARIES INTERVIEWED BEFORE MAY ELECTIONS INDICATED THAT THEY
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SEE THEIR PARTY AND DC MAINTAINING MORE OR LESS CURRENT PROPORTIONS, GROWING SLIGHTLY AS OTHER MINOR PARTIES CONTINUE TO DIMINISH. THEY TREAT DC CATHOLIC WORLD AS POLITICAL GIVEN WITH WHOM PCI MUST COOPERATE RATHER THAN AS MASS OF POTENTIAL CONVERTS. THEY ARE QUICK TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT CATHOLICS ARE STRONG AND GROWING FORCE AND TO STRESS WHAT THEY AND CATHOLICS HAVE IN COMMON (E.G., COMMITMENT TO LAW AND ORDER, YEARNING FOR MORE ORDER IN SCHOOLS). THEY SAY PCI CAN NEVER RULE ALONE BUT WILL ALWAYS BE SUBJECT TO DC VETO JUST AS REVERSE IS NOW TRUE. THEY APPEAR, IN OTHER WORDS, TO REGARD AS FINISHED THE DAYS OF PARTY'S RAPID INCREASE IN VOTE AND TO FEEL THAT FROM NOW ON GROWTH IN PARTY INFLUENCE MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED VIA ALLIANCE WITH CATHOLIC WORLD.

I. DID PCI SHIFT TOWARD MIDDLE NOT WORRY SECRETARIES ABOUT DROP-OFF IN SUPPORT ON LEFT? ALL REPLIED NO. THEY SAW LOSSES AS MAR-GINAL AND INVOLVING MOSTLY STALINISTS OR OTHER EXTREMISTS PCI WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT. THEY CONCEDED THAT SOME OTHERS, E.G., CERTAIN WORKERS, MIGHT RESENT PCI MODERATION BUT CONTENDED THAT THEY HAD NO PLACE ELSE TO GO. THERE WERE NO PARTIES TO PCI LEFT, ONE SECRETARY SNIFFED, ONLY GROUPS.

J. SECRETARIES WHOM WE QUESTIONED SAID RELATIONS WITH POLITICIANS OF OTHER PARTIES BETTER NOW THAN PREVIOUSLY. THIS DUE AT LEAST PARTLY TO FACT THAT NOW PCI OFTEN PART OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND THUS MUST WORK CLOSELY WITH DC AND OTHER COUNTERPARTS. RESULT, SAID VERONA PCI CITY SECRETARY, WAS THAT COMMUNISTS FEEL LESS ISOLATED.

K. MOST SECRETARIES MADE POINT OF INDICATING THEY WERE NOT RUNNING SECRET ORGANIZATION AND HAD NOTHING TO HIDE. ALMOST ALL TOOK US ON TOUR OF HEADQUARTERS, SHOWING VARIOUS OFFICES, REPRODUCTION MACHINERY, AND CONFERENCE ROOMS AND SOMETIMES PRESENTING COLLEAGUES. VARESE SECRETARY - ABOUT 50 AND BY FAR OLDEST SECRET

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IN GROUP - EXPLICITLY INVITED TOUGH QUESTIONS AND WITHOUT WAITING FOR ANY, LAUNCHED INTO EXPLANATION OF HIS PROVINCIAL FEDERATION'S FINANCING WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS COMING EXCLUSIVELY FROM MEMBERSHIP DUES AND LOCALLY SPONSORED FESTIVALS.

L. SINCE MAY LOCAL ELECTIONS INVOLVING TENTH OF ITALIAN ELECTORATE WHICH SAW PCI DROP SURPRISING NINE PERCENTAGE POINTS AS COMPARED WITH 1976 NATIONAL ELECTIONS, WE HAVE SPOKEN WITH THREE PCI SECRETARIES. REACTION OF ONE (VARESE) WAS TO PRETEND NOTHING MUCH HAD HAPPENED, OTHER TWO (MILAN AND PAVIA) WERE FRANK TO ADMIT PARTY HAD SUFFERED LARGE SETBACK. THEY WERE ALSO QUICK TO STATE THAT LOSS WOULD NOT CAUSE PARTY TO ABANDON MODERATE POSITIONS EVEN THOUGH THESE WERE IN THEIR MINDS PART OF REASON FOR PCI REVERSAL. MILAN SECRETARY CONTENDED THAT MASS PARTY LIKE PCI WHICH ASPIRED TO GOVERNMENT COULD NOT SWAY WITH EVERY BREEZE BUT HAD TO BE TRUE TO LONG-TERM STRATEGY IT THOUGHT WAS RIGHT. THAT WAS STILL HISTORIC COMPROMISE AND HE WAS CONFIDENT IT WOULD REMAIN SO.

13. CONCLUSIONS.

I CONCLUDE, AFTER MUCH THOUGHT AND MUCH INVESTIGATION DURING THE LAST FOUR YEARS, THAT THIS IS A VERY DIFFERENT ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY THAN I KNEW IN THE 1940'S AND 1950'S. I HAVE INTERVIEWED MANY HUNDREDS OF ITALIANS OF ALL PARTIES FROM ONE END OF THE COUNTRY TO THE OTHER BEGINNING IN 1949 AND HAVE SOME BASIS FOR EVALUATING THOSE INTERVIEWED. THE PCI VIEWS THAT WE

HAVE
HEARD AND REPORTED FROM MILAN SEEM TO US TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY HONESTLY

STATED. THEY ARE NOT THE VIEWS I HEARD FROM COMMUNIST LEADERS IN THE
PAST.
NOR DO THEY SOUND ANYTHING LIKE THOSE OF NEW SOVIET CONSUL GENERAL
IN MILAN.

14. NATURALLY, THESE CONCLUSIONS APPLY ONLY TO THIS AREA AND
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TO INDIVIDUALS TO WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN AND DURING THIS TIME
FRAME. OTHER AREAS, OTHER INDIVIDUALS AND OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES
MAY DICTATE OTHER CONCLUSIONS.

15. MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE I REALIZE THAT THE QUESTION OF THE
SINCERITY
OF INDIVIDUAL COMMUNIST OFFICIALS IS ONLY ONE OF THE CRITERIA IN
ASSESSING THE EVOLUTION OF THE PCI AND THAT PARTY'S LIKELY FUTURE
MOVES. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO SEE TO WHAT EXTENT THE PARTY IS
PRACTICING WHAT IT PREACHES. AND CONSIDERATION MUST BE GIVEN
TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT CHANGES IN THE ITALIAN OR INTERNATIONAL POLI-
TICAL CLIMATE MIGHT CAUSE THE PARTY SIGNIFICANTLY TO CHANGE
COURSE IN ONE DIRECTON OR ANOTHER.

16. BUT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER PCI OFFICIALS BELIEVE WHAT THEY ARE
SAYING IS - IF NOT THE ONLY IMPORTANT QUERY - AT LEAST ONE OF THEM.
AND
THE CONCLUSION OF OUR FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE WITH LEADERS IN THIS
AREA OF ITALY IS THAT OUR PCI INTERLOCUTORS ARE SUBSTANTIALLY
COMMITTED TO MODERATE POLICIES THAT WE ASSUME WOULD HAVE
BEEN INDIGESTABLE FOR COMMUNISTS HERE IN THE FIFTIES. THIS
MAY CAST SOME NEW LIGHT ON A PARTY WHICH HAS OFTEN BEEN AN ENEMY
OF THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND WHICH IS PLAYING AN
INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN ITALIAN AFFAIRS BOTH AT OUT
LOCAL LEVEL AND NATIONALLY.FINA

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